

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

other names/site number: Old State Library, Executive Office Building, Patrick Henry Building

street & number: 1111 East Broad Street not for publication: N/A
city or town: Richmond vicinity
state: Virginia code: VA county: (Independent City) code: 760 Zip: 23219

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally X statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official	Date
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State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby certify that this property is: _____ other (explain): _____

_____ entered in the National Register

See continuation sheet.

 determined eligible for the
National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register

____ removed from the National Register

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement: Art Deco

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)foundation Stone: exterior surfaceroof Built-up Flat Roofwalls Limestone Ashlar over Steel Frameother

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance 1938-1941

1938-1941

Significant Dates 1941

1941

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Baskervill & Son

Carneal, Johnson & Wright

Alfred Morton Githens & Francis Keally

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary Location of Additional Data

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☒ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

☐ University

☐ Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources and Library of Virginia

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.733, less than an acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing
1 <u>18</u>	<u>285110</u>	<u>4157260</u>

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Calder Loth, Senior Architectural Historian

Organization: Virginia Department of Historic Resources date: April 2005

street & number: 2801 Kensington Avenue telephone 804-367-2323

city or town: Richmond state: VA zip code: 23221

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

Name: Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of General Services and Division of Engineering

street & number: 202 North 9th Street, Suite 209 telephone: 804-786-6152

city or town: Richmond state: VA zip code: 23219

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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7. Summary Description:

Summary Description

The Old State Library building is a massive government structure rendered in “Stripped Classicism,” a style popular for public works in the 1930s and ‘40s, both in America and Europe. The style is characterized by the monumentality and proportions of Classical architecture but is devoid of its ornamentation. The building occupies an entire city block between East Broad and Capitol streets. It, along with Richmond’s Old City Hall and the General Assembly Building compose the architectural backdrop for Capitol Square and Jefferson’s State Capitol. Faced with plain ashlar of Indiana limestone, the exterior reads as a two-story structure having its upper level surrounded by a “colonnade” of square piers framing the window openings. The facades, however, mask multiple levels. Lending the building its distinctive stepped-pyramid outline are the two setback levels above the structure’s main body. These levels form the building’s only additions and were constructed in the early 1970s following original architects’ plans to accommodate book stacks. The building was vacated in 1998. Beginning in 2004, all but the principal architectural spaces and suites of upper-level offices were either remodeled or removed from the interior in order to convert the structure into an executive office building housing the working office of the Governor and offices for the Cabinet. Care has been taken to retain the Art Deco character of the entrance hall, reading rooms, Supreme Court chamber and lobby, and rare book room.

Detailed Description

General

Constructed in 1938-40, the Old State Library building ranks among the Commonwealth of Virginia’s principal architectural projects in the Capitol Square complex. It was built to serve the dual purpose of housing the collections of the State Library and Archives as well as the offices of Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals and the Office of the Attorney General. The library and the legal agencies each were given their own identical entrance on a principal elevation. The Supreme Court of Appeals remained in the building until it transferred to the former Federal Reserve Bank in 1978. The library remained until 1998 with the completion of the moving of its

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collections to the present Library of Virginia at East Broad and Ninth Streets, leaving the building vacant. In 2002 planning began to convert the building into an executive office building serving the Governor's Office as well as the cabinet secretaries and their staffs. The plans called for the preservation of the main character-defining interior spaces, including the library entrance hall, the two main reading rooms, the rare book room, the Supreme Court courtroom and lobby and the legal section's first-floor entrance foyer. The conversion necessitated the removal of the core stacks to create a multi-story central atrium providing light to perimeter offices on the upper levels. Other functional spaces throughout the building were designated either for removal or for significant remodeling to accommodate the new function. However, the two levels of offices above the main floor were left intact although the offices themselves were completely redesigned.

Occupancy of many of the office suites by the Governor's Office and the Governor's cabinet is to be accomplished in May 2005. Beginning in January 2006, the two main reading rooms will temporarily serve as chambers for the House of Delegates and the Senate for their 2006 session, while the State Capitol is undergoing restoration. Following the completion of the State Capitol restoration, the reading rooms will be restored to serve as function rooms for the Governor's Office. Much of the original architectural character of the reading rooms is to be maintained. Except for the removal of the mechanical penthouse, added in the early 1970s, the exterior will remain unchanged.

Exterior:

The Old State Library building occupies the entire city block bounded by East Broad Street, North Eleventh Street, North Twelfth Street, and the Darden Garden, formerly Capitol Street. Its only landscaping is a narrow planting strip around the perimeter of the building. The massive edifice forms part of the monumental architectural backdrop of the Virginia State Capitol, which, along with the library building, is composed of the neoclassical General Assembly Building (originally the Life of Virginia headquarters), and the Gothic Revival Old City Hall. The three buildings fill the three blocks lining the former Capitol Street, immediately to the north of Capitol Square. The consistent scale but contrasting styles of each building compose a unique architectural assemblage.

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The library building has an imposing simplicity inherent in the tenets of “Stripped Classicism.” With its clean geometry, the massive public edifice is designed to appear as a structure of two principal stories. The exterior elevations, however, mask many levels. The ground floor is treated with tall, unadorned window openings framing steel mullions painted black. The upper level reads as a colonnade composed of plain piers framing the window openings, also fitted with steel mullions. The two levels served by these bays are separated in each opening by a metal panel. Crowning the piers is a band of inscriptions extending around the entire building.

The raised lettering of the inscriptions is in a plain, Art Deco style. The inscriptions read as follows: “REASON AND FREE INQUIRY ARE THE ONLY EFFECTUAL AGENTS AGAINST ERROR. THEY ARE THE NATURAL ENEMIES OF ERROR AND OF ERROR ONLY:: THOMAS JEFFERSON” (south elevation); “A KNOWLEDGE OF BOOKS IS THE BASIS UPON WHICH OTHER KNOWLEDGE IS TO BE BUILT:: WASHINGTON” (west elevation); “THE JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT COMES HOME IN ITS EFFECTS TO EVERY MANS FIRESIDE: IT PASSES ON HIS PROPERTY HIS REPUTATION HIS LIFE HIS ALL:: JOHN MARSHALL” (north elevation); and “LIBERTY AND LEARNING: BOTH BEST SUPPORTED WHEN LEANING EACH ON THE OTHER:: JAMES MADISON” (east elevation).

Above the inscription band is a parapet finished off with a fascia consisting of a series of reeded annulets. In the early 1970s, two setback levels were added to the top of the building, lending it its distinctive stepped pyramidal profile. These upper levels were built to contain expanded stack areas, and are topped with the same annulet fascias as the elevations below. According to former State Librarian, Randolph Church, the building was originally designed to have these upper levels when space demands required them; they follow expansion plans prepared by the original architects.¹ Not included in the original plans, however, was the metal penthouse screen enclosing rooftop mechanical equipment. This penthouse was removed in the current renovation, thus restoring the building’s intended profile.

The whole of the exterior, including the later upper levels, is faced with gray Indiana limestone laid in smooth ashlar of exceptionally large blocks. Panels of Salisbury pink granite are used

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¹ Conversation between Randolph Church and Calder Loth in the early 1970s when the additions were under construction.

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below a molded stone water table. The great frames around the north and south entrances are of Minnesota rainbow granite, a syenite granite darker than the Salisbury granite. Each entrance has an inscription in the doorway frieze. The south entrance inscription reads "Virginia State Library." The north (Broad Street) entrance inscription reads "Supreme Court of Appeals." The doors in each entrance, and the ornamental glazed grills above them, are of bronze. Each entrance was originally fitted with a central revolving door flanked by two hinged doors. These have been replaced in the remodeling with glazed hinged doors to better accommodate handicapped visitors. Besides the two principal entrances, the only other entry into the building is the loading dock on the 12th Street elevation.

Interior

The doors of the library entrance on the south elevation open onto a lofty foyer lined with Montana travertine. The space is lit by a spherical globe with bronze mounts. Facing the doorway is a short flight of steps at the head of which is a bronze grille or fence with a central gate of two leaves. The pickets in the grille are decorated with stylized leaves in an Art Deco mode. Highlighting the grille are tall reeded stanchions topped by rings framing sculptures of open books. Perpendicular to the entrance lobby is a long monumental hall occupying the center of the building. The space, originally termed the "Entrance Hall" has the air of a great gallery on an ocean liner. Lining its walls, from floor to ceiling, is lightly stained oak paneling. The square panels are formed in large sheets built up in five thicknesses. Adding to the Art Deco character of the space are the great curved corners framing the four principal entries. The library information desk was originally situated in the center of the north wall, facing the entrance. The desk was removed during the remodeling in order to create a passageway to the north entrance foyer with a new elevator lobby in between. Above the desk was formerly a large mural by artist Julien Binford, depicting in a highly stylized manner employing filmy pastel colors, George Mason and the enactment of the Virginia Declaration of Rights. Long considered of questionable aesthetic merit, the mural also has been removed as part of the remodeling. Panels replicating the original panels are being installed in the void.

The hall original had four display cases set into the walls. The two north ones have been removed and the voids paneled over. The two cased on the south wall are preserved. The hall floors are

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terrazzo in a pattern of large squares. Lighting the space are three very large and handsomely crafted bronze fixtures consisting of wide circular pans suspended on a series of rods.

At either end of the hall is a ceiling-height glazed entrance with bronze mullions leading into a reading room. These glazed entrance screens have been duplicated in each entrance in the current remodeling to create an extra sound barrier for the reading rooms. The two ell-shaped reading rooms are mirror images of one another. Each room was originally fitted with linoleum floors and acoustic tile ceilings. Skirting both of the rooms were built-in oak bookcases suggesting tall wainscoting. The windows were purposely set high in the walls above the bookcases to diminish exterior traffic noises. The bookcases have been removed in the remodeling and the resulting voids have been covered with oak paneling matching the original. Each of the reading rooms is lighted with six hanging fixtures matching those in the entrance hall. Both rooms have two floor-to-ceiling round columns in the angle of the ell. The columns have been retained but the spaces in the base of each of the ells have been filled in with workspaces. The remodeling necessitated the removal of the checkout desks set just inside the entrance to each room.

The rest of the library section was a maze of rooms on various levels, mostly functional workrooms and offices with a utilitarian architectural character. These have either been removed or remodeled in order to accommodate new functions.

The Supreme Court's courtroom, the principal space of the building's legal section, is on the third level of the Broad Street side of the building. The courtroom's lobby is paneled from floor to ceiling in walnut with a dark marble base. The two-story courtroom lobby has a gallery on its south wall. The courtroom, which is to be used as a meeting room for the Governor's Office, is an exceptionally handsome space in its solemn simplicity. It has a low dado of America verde antique marble. Above it, the walls are paneled to the ceiling in American walnut with matched figured graining in the panels and an inlay of ebony around the frieze. The law library room, across the lobby from the courtroom, was an exceptionally plain space and could not be retained in the remodeling.

The offices formerly serving the Attorney General's staff are situated along two levels of narrow corridors on the west, south, and east sides of the building. The general layout of the offices is being retained in the remodeling, but the spaces have been completely modernized and are quite

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plain. Neither the office of the State Librarian nor the office of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, both located on different levels in the northwest corner of the building, could be retained.

Where central space above the main floor, formerly occupied by the multiple levels of book stacks is now a lofty central atrium topped by a large skylight. This completely new space has been handsomely appointed in a modified Art Deco character. The atrium's surrounding upper levels are lined with windows lighting the offices in the building's upper tiers.

Among the most interesting spaces in the building, and one that is being left completely intact, is the rare book room. It is located on a lower level, intended to be reached only by a controlled access stairway to ensure security. The first flight of steps leads to a gallery extending around three sides of the room. The walls of the gallery are lined with bookcases with chromium mesh doors. The gallery railing is of chromium and plate glass. The second flight of steps leads to the main floor, beneath the gallery of which is a series of study and consultation rooms separated by glass partitions. In one corner of the room is a walk-in vault. The room is paneled with mahogany throughout. The clean lines and fine materials and finishes make the room a striking example of the Art Deco style.

While the remodeling of the building for its new use has necessitated the removal of many of the spaces that defined the structure as a 1940s library and court facility, the essential character of the structure has been maintained through the preservation of the main architectural spaces. Remarkably, the extensive remodeling required no change to the architectural character of the exterior.

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8. Statement of Significance

Statement of Significance

Completed in 1940, the Old State Library ranks with the Virginia's outstanding examples of "Stripped Classicism," a style of architecture favored for governmental and other institutional buildings in the 1930s and '40s throughout the United States and Europe. The style represented a Modernist approach to Classical architecture, where the forms, proportions, and materials of Classicism were employed without Classicism's rich ornamentation. The result is a strong, impersonal quality, akin to that of the International Style. The design was the product of a collaboration of two prominent Richmond firms: Baskervill & Son, and Carneal, Johnson & Wright. Alfred Morton Githens and Francis Keally of New York served as consultants on library design. The building was erected in 1938-40 to house both the Virginia State Library and the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals, along with the Office of the Attorney General. The removal these functions to new facilities has enabled the building to undergo an extensive interior remodeling as an executive office building accommodating the working sections of the Governor's Office and the Governor's cabinet, scheduled for occupancy in May of 2005. The exterior remains completely unchanged and continues to serve as an essential component of the monumental architectural backdrop of the Virginia State Capitol. The principal character-defining interior spaces have been preserved.

Background Information

The Virginia State Library and Archives, now known as the Library of Virginia, traces its origins to 1619, with the establishment of the Land Office, which today is an important section of office of the State Librarian. A library as such was first set up by the colonial government, and was housed in the capitol in Williamsburg. An official library for the state was authorized during the session of 1823-26 with the call for a library to be located at the seat of government. A state library was then set up within the capitol building itself. In 1895, the library received its own building, located just south of the Executive Mansion on Capitol Square. The building, designed by William Poindexter, housed both the State Library and the Office of the Attorney General, along with the Supreme Court of Appeals. The collection quickly outgrew the building, thus, in 1936, the General Assembly established the State Library Building Commission to investigate

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the purchase of a site. In 1938, the General Assembly appropriated additional funds for the building. The state expenditure of \$1,000,000 was supplemented by an \$818,181 grant from the federal Public Works Administration.

The new library was designed by Baskervill & Son, and Carneal, Johnson, & Wright, prominent Richmond firms well known for the high quality of their institutional and residential works. Consulting architects were Alfred Morton Githens and Francis Keally of New York, both national experts in library design. The contractor for the project was Doyle and Russell. As with its former building on Capitol Square, the new building was designed to accommodate the quarters of the Supreme Court of Appeals, the State Law Library, and Office of the Attorney General, then called the Department of Law. The design called for the library and archives to have its entrance on Capitol Street, with the legal and judiciary sections to have an identical entrance on the opposite side, on Broad Street.

The design of the building was what has been termed "Stripped Classicism," a style that references monumental classical design in proportion and massing, but stripped of the rich ornamentation associated with Classical works. This was a popular approach for public buildings beginning in the 1920s. It was a way maintaining the timeless beauty of Classical works while giving a building a modern air with clean lines and plain surfaces associated with Modernism. It distilled the Classical vocabulary to its barest essentials. In a 1941 article in Commonwealth, Githens and Keally described their rationale of the design: "The character of the building was governed by the design of the State Capitol. Any repetition of the columns and cornices of this beautiful and classic design was carefully avoided, lest the new building detract from its repetition. Thus, by its broad, plain wall surfaces the State Library becomes a foil for the Capitol."² They followed with a statement proclaiming the essence of the concept of Stripped Classicism: "Ornament has been avoided, effect being obtained through discriminate choice of material, color harmony, and careful proportioning."³

Ground breaking for the new library took place on December 7, 1938. Later that month, the Aluminum Building, an all-metal building erected in 1931 for the Richmond Department of Public Works, was moved from its location at Eleventh and Capitol streets to clear the block.

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² Alfred Morton Githens and Francis Keally, "An Example in Library Design," Commonwealth, October, 1941, p. 7

³ *ibid*, p.8

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Several antebellum dwellings on the block had already been demolished. The cornerstone was laid on February 22, 1940, George Washington's birthday. The prodigious structure, one of the most ambitious state building projects up to that time, was opened to the public in December 1940, and formally dedicated on October 16, 1941. The legal section, including the Supreme Court of Appeals was ready for occupancy by September 1, 1940, and was dedicated on January 6, 1941. Between September and December 1940, as many as thirty WPA workers moved 330,000 books, 2,000,000 manuscripts, and 10,000 maps into the new building.

The new building, including both its divisions, was a state-of-the-art facility for its time. It accommodated the library division, the general library branch of which included printed books, serials, newspapers, microfilm, motion pictures, and prints and photographs. The archives division was responsible for state and local records, genealogical records, church records, and oral history records among other resources. The building also had an auditorium, a photograph laboratory, and a laboratory for manuscript conservation.

By the 1970s the building was in need of expansion. Two setback tiers for additional stacks were added atop the flat roof. The tiers were part of the original architectural design and were intended to be added whenever needed. The building served well for four decades, but by the late 1980s it was showing signs of being outmoded. Concern for its future viability was raised when it was discovered that its ventilations systems were permeated with mold, a problem that would be difficult to correct without significant and costly overhaul of all the building's systems. Moreover, despite the fact that the legal section, including the Supreme Court of Appeals, had vacated its part of the building in 1978, the library was quickly reaching its capacity, even with this additional space. Thus the decision was made to erect a new facility at Ninth and Broad streets. Work on a new building, to be called the Library of Virginia, began in 1993 and was finished by 1997 when the collections were relocated and the former State Library was vacated.

In 2002 the Governor and General Assembly approved funding for the renovation of the library building. Scheduled for completion in May of 2005, the building will provide 200,000 square feet for an executive office building, housing the Governor's working office, offices for the Governor's cabinet, and offices for key finance and administrative agencies. It will also serve as the temporary home for the 2006 General Assembly while the State Capitol is closed for restoration, scheduled be completed in 2007.

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Recognizing that the building is an important work of architecture, the decision was made to undertake no changes whatever to the exterior. While the renovation will involve removal of much of the functional areas of the building, including all of its book and manuscript stacks, the major character-defining spaces, including the monumental central hall, the Supreme Court courtroom, and rare book room, are being carefully preserved. The renovation is being directed by Dr. George Skarmas, of Hillier Associates, a Philadelphia architectural firm specializing in the renovation of historic buildings.

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Bibliographical References

Randolph W. Church, "The State Library's Functional Plan," Commonwealth, October 1941, Vol. VIII, No.10.

Alfred Morton Githens and Francis Keally, "An Example in Library Design," Commonwealth, October 1941, Vol. VIII, No. 10.

Wilmer Hall, "The Virginia State Library: History, Homes Work," Commonwealth, October, 1941, Vol. VIII, No. 10.

Wilmer Hall, "Inscriptions on Frieze of State Library," Commonwealth, October, 1941, Vol. VIII, No. 10.

Land and Community Associates, "Survey of State-Owned Properties: Department of General Services. May, 1991, Unpublished ms in archives of Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

William J. Van Schreeven, "A Public Record Office for Virginia," Commonwealth, October, 1941, Vo. VIII, No. 10.

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Verbal Boundary Description:

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The boundaries are selected to conform to the downtown Richmond city block, which the building occupies in its entirety. The building occupies the entire city block bounded by East Broad Street, North Eleventh Street, North Twelfth Street, and the Darden Garden, formerly Capitol Street. The building has no grounds other than a narrow planting strip between the base of the building and the public sidewalks. The Richmond City tax parcel map number is E0000152001.

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries are selected to conform to the downtown Richmond city block, which the building occupies in its entirety. The boundary includes the entire building/block identified as tax parcel E0000152001 on the Richmond City tax map.

Section Photographs **Page** 13

The following information is the same for all photographs:
Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia, #127-0188

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Taken by Calder Loth of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR)
Negatives stored at VDHR in Richmond, Virginia

Photo 1 of 5:
Exterior, Southeast Corner
Negative #19867
Frame #15

Photo 2 of 5:
Interior, Rare Book Room
Negative #21873
Frame #3

Photo 3 of 5:
Interior, Supreme Court of Appeals Courtroom
Negative #21873
Frame #6

Photo 4 of 5:
Interior, Main Hall
Negative #21873
Frame#10

Photo 5 of 5:
Interior, East Reading Room
Negative #21873
Frame#16